

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT PREMIER ZHAO'S
WELCOMING BANQUET

BEIJING - 19 MAY 1986

MR PREMIER, IT IS GOOD BE TO AMONG FRIENDS AGAIN IN BEIJING. THERE ARE MANY FAMILIAR FACES HERE THIS EVENING WHO, IN DIFFERENT FIELDS, ARE FIRM FRIENDS OF AUSTRALIA. IN THE TWO YEARS SINCE I WAS LAST IN BEIJING I AM GLAD THAT WE PERSONALLY HAVE KEPT CLOSELY IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER AND THAT WE AND OTHER LEADERS OF OUR GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN ABLE FREQUENTLY TO RENEW FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH THE VISITS OF CLOSE COLLEAGUES.

IT IS NOW THIRTEEN YEARS SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND CHINA AND THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP HAS COME A LONG WAY SINCE THEN.

THERE IS NOW A STEADY EXCHANGE OF VISITS BETWEEN THE POLITICAL LEADERS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES. IN 1983 I WELL REMEMBER WELCOMING YOU, MR PREMIER, TO AUSTRALIA - THE FIRST VISIT BY A CHINESE PREMIER TO AUSTRALIA AND, OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO MY GOVERNMENT, THE FIRST VISIT OF A FOREIGN HEAD OF GOVERNMENT TO AUSTRALIA AFTER THE LABOR PARTY WAS ELECTED TO GOVERNMENT. IN 1984 I VISITED CHINA FOR THE FIRST TIME AS PRIME MINISTER - ALTHOUGH I HAD BEEN ABLE TO VISIT PREVIOUSLY IN ANOTHER CAPACITY.

AND IN 1985, WE HAD THE HONOUR OF WELCOMING THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY, HU YAOBANG, TO AUSTRALIA. MY CURRENT VISIT MARKS THE FIFTH SUCCESSIVE YEAR THAT CHINESE AND AUSTRALIAN LEADERS HAVE VISITED EACH OTHERS COUNTRY - ITSELF A CLEAR INDICATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL VITALITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP.

OUR RELATIONSHIP IS CLOSE AND GROWING, AND IS ONE DESIGNED TO ENDURE.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS HAVE GROWN IN LINE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP. IT IS A RELATIONSHIP WHICH OFFERS THE PROMISE OF MAJOR ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO BOTH COUNTRIES AS TIME PASSES AND WHICH IS WORTH TAKING THE TIME TO ESTABLISH ON A FIRM FOUNDATION IN THESE FORMATIVE YEARS. I APPRECIATE THAT AT SOME TIMES THIS WILL REQUIRE THAT PROGRESS ON PARTICULAR ISSUES MAY BE A LITTLE SLOWER THAN ON OTHER ISSUES AS COMPLEX QUESTIONS ARE EXPLORED PROPERLY. BUT LET THERE BE NO DOUBT OF THE DETERMINATION OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO WORK THROUGH AND BEYOND EVEN THESE TIMES, WHICH IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES COULD LEAD TO FRUSTRATION.

THE VOLUME AND VALUE OF OUR TRADE WITH EACH OTHER HAS GROWN ENORMOUSLY SINCE WE FIRST MET IN 1983. WE ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT THE GROWTH HAS BEEN MORE PRONOUNCED IN AUSTRALIA'S EXPORT TRADE WITH CHINA THAN IN OUR IMPORT TRADE. WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OUR GENERAL POLICIES TO PROMOTE INCREASED COMPETITIVENESS AND AN OUTWARD LOOKING ORIENTATION FOR AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY, WE HAVE BEEN STEADILY REDUCING ARTIFICIAL IMPEDIMENTS TO EXPANSION OF OUR IMPORT TRADE. IN ADDITION, SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHINA ACTION PLAN AS A RESULT OF YOUR 1983 VISIT TO AUSTRALIA, THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE PROMOTION OF CHINESE EXPORTS.

WE RECOGNISE THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF EXPANDING EXPORTS IN YOUR MODERNISATION PROCESS, STRESSED RECENTLY IN YOUR REPORT TO THE NATIONAL PEOPLES CONGRESS. WE ARE PLEDGED TO CONTINUE TO PURSUE POLICIES WHICH EXPAND TRADE. WE ARE PLEDGED ALSO TO CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE AUSTRALIAN FIRMS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EXPANSION OF CHINA'S PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY FOR EXPORT, AND TO ASSIST DIRECTLY THE MARKETING EFFORTS OF CHINESE ENTERPRISES IN AUSTRALIA. WHEN WE FIRST MET, I HAVE BEEN TOLD, THERE WAS ONLY ONE SINO-AUSTRALIAN JOINT VENTURE IN OPERATION. NOW MORE THAN 16 SINO-AUSTRALIAN JOINT VENTURES HAVE BEEN SIGNED AND HAVE EITHER BEGUN OR ARE PREPARING TO BEGIN OPERATING IN CHINA, AND A FURTHER 37 AGREEMENTS ARE UNDER DISCUSSION.

CHINA HAS SHOWN ACTIVE INTEREST IN LARGE-SCALE INVESTMENT IN THE AUSTRALIAN RESOURCES SECTOR, AND YOU AND I WILL PARTICIPATE IN A SIGNING CELEBRATION TOMORROW WHICH IS THE FIRST PRODUCT OF THAT INTEREST. SINCE WE FIRST MET THREE YEARS AGO, THREE AUSTRALIAN BANKS HAVE ESTABLISHED REPRESENTATIVE OFFICES IN BEIJING AND AS A DIRECT RESULT OF REPRESENTATIONS MADE TO ME IN BEIJING TWO YEARS AGO, WE WELCOME THE RE-OPENING OF A BRANCH OF THE BANK OF CHINA IN SYDNEY EARLIER THIS YEAR.

EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, CULTURAL AND SPORTING EXCHANGES HAVE LENT ADDITIONAL SUBSTANCE TO THE RELATIONSHIP. AUSTRALIA HAS NOTED CHINA'S DECISION IN 1985 TO EXPAND ITS NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN ORDER FURTHER TO DEVELOP ITS HUMAN RESOURCES POTENTIAL TO MEET THE PRESSING REQUIREMENTS OF MODERNISATION.

MY GOVERNMENT SEES MUTUAL ADVANTAGE IN A SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION OF EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES WITH CHINA. WE SEE THIS AS CONTRIBUTING DIRECTLY AND USEFULLY TO CHINA'S MODERNISATION PROCESS.

THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTH AUSTRALIA AND CHINA HAVE PLACED CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR RELATIONS ON THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONTACTS.

WE HAVE IN AUSTRALIA AN AUSTRALIA-CHINA COUNCIL WHOSE CHIEF FUNCTION IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING THROUGH SUCH CONTACTS. IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO ADVISE YOU THAT THE GOVERNMENT, ON THE ADVICE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER, HAS APPOINTED A FORMER PRIME MINISTER, MR GOUGH WHITLAM, AS THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE AUSTRALIA CHINA COUNCIL.

THIS APPOINTMENT IS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT SINCE BACK IN 1972 MR WHITLAM WAS THE PRIME MOVER BEHIND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND AUSTRALIA. MR WHITLAM'S CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIA-CHINA RELATIONS WAS VITALLY IMPORTANT AND WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT HE CAN CONTINUE IN HIS NEW CAPACITY THE PROMOTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH HE HELPED BRING ABOUT.

MR PREMIER, THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP REFLECTS OUR INCREASING FOCUS ON THE ASIA/PACIFIC REGION IN WHICH OUR TWO COUNTRIES ARE LOCATED, AND ON THAT REGION'S ASPIRATIONS FOR PEACE, SECURITY AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY.

IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT TENSIONS STILL EXIST IN THE REGION. MOST NOTABLY IN INDOCHINA, AFGHANISTAN AND THE KOREAN PENINSULA. IT IS OUR COMMON HOPE THAT JUST AND PEACEFUL SETTLEMENTS MAY SOON BE FOUND IN THESE AREAS OF POTENTIAL DANGER SO THAT ALL COUNTRIES CAN ^{PARTICIPATE} PARTICULAR MORE FULLY IN THE DYNAMIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT IS ALREADY OCCURRING IN MUCH OF OUR REGION.

WHILE IT IS NOT YET ALTOGETHER A REGION OF PEACE, THE PACIFIC REGION AND ESPECIALLY THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGION HAS EMERGED DECISIVELY IN RECENT DECADES AS THE MAJOR CENTRE OF WORLD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE HUGE PROGRESS THAT CHINA HAS MADE OVER THE PAST SEVEN YEARS HAS CONTRIBUTED NEW MOMENTUM TO THESE HISTORIC PROCESSES.

THIS GENERATION HAS BEFORE IT THE REAL PROSPECT OF OUR REGION EMERGING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY AS A PLACE OF PROSPERITY FOR ALL OF OUR PEOPLES. BUT FOR THIS TO COME TO PASS WE ALL NEED PEACE, AND THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION MUST INTEGRATE THEIR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS ON THE BASIS OF COMPLEMENTARY AND MUTUAL ADVANTAGE.

MR PREMIER, WE HAVE HAD USEFUL DISCUSSIONS TODAY ON A RANGE OF ISSUES. I LOOK FORWARD VERY MUCH TO THE REST OF MY PROGRAM IN BEIJING AND TO TRAVELLING TO A NUMBER OF PROVINCES TO SEE AT FIRST HAND THE PROGRESS REALISED THUS FAR IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHINA'S REFORM AND MODERNISATION STRATEGY.

YOU KNOW MR PREMIER THAT SINCE OUR FIRST MEETING IN 1983 I HAVE SAID MANY TIMES, AND IN MANY COUNTRIES, THAT WHAT IS HAPPENING TO CHINA UNDER THIS STRATEGY IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORLD TODAY. YOU HAVE OUR ABIDING BEST WISHES IN YOUR IMMENSELY SIGNIFICANT ENDEAVOURS.

MAY I PROPOSE A TOAST TO THE HEALTH OF MY GOOD FRIEND
PREMIER ZHAO, AND THE HEALTH OF OUR CHINESE AND
AUSTRALIAN FRIENDS HERE, AND THE CONTINUED HEALTH OF
CHINA-AUSTRALIA RELATIONS. GAN BEI.

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